

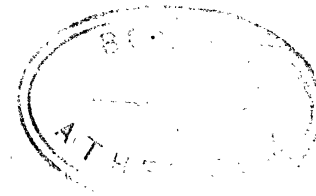
FROM HAND TO MOUTH.

GOOD STORIES.

PART IV.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
FROM HAND TO MOUTH <i>Fitz-James O'Brien</i>	3
(Illustrated by S. Eytinge, Jr.)	
COUNT ERNEST'S HOME <i>Paul Heyse</i>	50
(Illustrated by C. Parsons.)	
LITTLE PEG O'SHAUGHNESSY	119
(Illustrated by W. J. Hennessy.)	
A SHABBY GENTEEL STORY. <i>W. M. Thackeray</i>	153



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6-10

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1868.

GOOD STORIES.



FROM HAND TO MOUTH.

I. — HOW I FELL IN WITH COUNT GOLOPTIOUS.

THE evening of the 8th of November, in the present year, was distinguished by the occurrence of two sufficiently remarkable events. On that evening Mr. Ullman produced Meyerbeer's opera of "The Huguenots," for the first time in this country, and we were unexpectedly visited by a snow-storm. Winter and the great lyrical dramatist made their *début* together. Winter opened with a slow movement of heavy snow-flakes, — an andante, soft and melancholy, and breathing of polar drowsiness. The echoing streets were muffled, and the racket and din of the thoroughfares sounded like the roar of a far-off ocean. The large flakes fell sleepily through the dim blue air, like soft white birds that had been stricken with cold in the upper skies, and were sinking benumbed to earth. The trees and lamp-posts, decorated with snowy powder, gave the city the air of being laid out for a grand supper-party, with ornamental confectionery embellishing the long white table. Through the hoar drifts that lay along the streets peeped the black tips of building-stones and mud-piles in front of half-finished houses, until Broadway looked as if it was enveloped in an ermine robe, dotted with the black tails with which cunning furriers ornament that skin.

Despite the snow, I sallied forth with my friend Cobra, the musical critic of the New York Daily Cockchafer, to hear Meyerbeer's masterpiece. We entered a mute omnibus with a frozen driver,

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whose congealed hands could scarcely close upon our fares, — which accounted perhaps for a slight error in the change he gave us, — and so rolled up silently to Union Square, whence we floundered into the Academy. I listened to that wonderful picture of one of France's anniversaries of massacre, with bloody copies of which that "God-protected country" (*vide* speech from the throne on any public occasion) is continually furnishing the civilized world. The roar of Catholic cannon, — the whistle of Huguenot bullets, — the stealthy tread of conspiring priests, — the mournful wailing of women whose hearts foretell evil before it comes, — the sudden outburst of the treacherous, bloodthirsty Romish tiger, — the flight and shrieks of men and women about to die, — the valiant, despairing fighting of the stern Protestants, — the voice of the devilish French king, shouting from his balcony to his assassins the remorseless command, "Tuez! tuez!" — the ominous trickling of the red streams that sprung from cloven Lutheran hearts, and rolled slowly through the kennels; — all this arose before me vital and real, as the music of that sombre opera smote the air. Cobra, whose business it was — being a critic — not to attend to the performance, languidly surveyed the house, or availed himself of the intermission between the acts to fortify himself with certain refreshing but stimulating beverages.

The opera being concluded, we proceeded to Pilgarlik's, — Pilgarlik keeps a charming private restaurant at the upper end of Broadway, — and there, over a few reed-birds and a bottle of Burgundy, Cobra concocted his criticism on "The Huguenots," — in which he talked learnedly of dominants, sub-dominants, ascending by thirds, and descending by twenty-thirds, and such like, while I, with nothing more weighty on my mind than paying for the supper, smoked my cigar and sipped my concluding cup of black coffee in a state of divine repose.

The snow was deep, when, at about one o'clock, A. M., Cobra and myself parted at the corner of Eighth Street and Broadway, each bound for his respective home. Cobra lived in Fourth Avenue, — I live, or lived, in Bleecker Street. The snow was deep, and the

city quite still, as I half ran, half floundered down the sidewalk, thinking what a nice hot brandy-toddy I would make myself when I got home, and the pleasure I would have in boiling the water over my gas-light on a lately invented apparatus which I had acquired, and in which I took much pride; I also recollected with a thrill of pleasure that I had purchased a fresh supply of lemons that morning, so that nothing was needed for the scientific concoction of a nightcap. I turned down Bleecker Street and reached my door. I was singing a snatch of Pierre Dupont's song of *La Vigne* as I pulled out my night-key and inserted it in that orifice so perplexing to young men who have been to a late supper. One vigorous twist, and I was at home. The half-uttered triumphal chant of the Frenchman, who dilates with metrical malice on the fact that the vine does not flourish in England, died on my lips. The key turned, but the door, usually so yielding to the members of our family, obstinately refused to open. A horrible thought flashed across my mind. They had locked me out! A new servant had perhaps arrived, and cautiously barricaded the entrance; or the landlady — to whom, at the moment, I was under some slight pecuniary responsibility — had taken this cruel means of recalling me to a sense of my position. But it could not be. There was some mistake. There was fluff in my key, — yes, that was it, — there was fluff in the barrel of my night-key. I instantly proceeded to make a Pandean pipe of that instrument, and blew into the tube until my face resembled that queer picture of the wind in *Æsop's* fables, as it is represented in the act of endeavoring to make the traveller take off his cloak. A hopelessly shrill sound responded to my efforts. The key was clear as a flute. Was it the wrong key? I felt in every pocket, vaguely expecting a supernumerary one to turn up, but in vain. While thus occupied, the conviction forced itself on my mind that I had no money.

Locked out, with a foot of snow on the ground, and nothing but a three-cent piece and two new cents — so painfully bright that they presented illusory resemblances to half-eagles — in my pocket!

I knew well that an appeal to the bell was hopeless. I had

tried it once before for three hours at a stretch, without the slightest avail. It is my private conviction that every member of that household, who slept at all within hearing of the bell, carefully stuffed his or her ears with cotton before retiring for the night, so as to be out of the reach of temptation to answer it. Every inmate of that establishment, after a certain hour, determinedly rehearsed the part of Ulysses when he was passing the Sirens. They were deaf to the melody of the bell. I once knew a physician who, to keep up appearances, had a night-bell affixed to his door. The initiated alone knew that he regularly took the tongue out before he went to bed. His conscience was satisfied, and he slept calmly. I might just as well have been pulling his bell.

Break the windows! Why not? Excellent idea; but, as I before stated, my pecuniary position scarcely allowed of such liberties. What was I to do? I could not walk up and down the city all night. I would freeze to death, and there would be a horrible paragraph in the morning papers about the sad death of a destitute author. I ran over rapidly in my mind every hotel in the city with which I was at all acquainted, in order to see if there was in any one of them a night-porter who knew me. Alas! Night-porters knew me not. Why had I not a watch or a diamond ring? I resolved on the instant to purchase both as soon as I got ten or twelve hundred dollars. I began to wonder where the news-boys' depot was, and recollected there was a warm spot somewhere over the Herald press-room, on which I had seen ragged urchins huddling as I passed by late of night. I was ruminating gravely over the awful position in which I was placed, when a loud but somewhat buttery voice disturbed me by shouting from the sidewalk: "Ha, ha! Capital joke! Locked out, eh? You'll never get in."

A stranger! perhaps benevolent, thought I. If so, I am indeed saved. To rush down the steps, place my hand upon his shoulder, and gaze into his face with the most winning expression I was capable of assuming, was but the work of several minutes, — which, however, included two tumbles on the stoop.

"Can it — can it be," I said, "that you have a night-key?"

"A night-key!" he answered with a jolly laugh, and speaking as if his mouth was full of turtle, — "a night-key! What the deuce should I do with a night-key? I never go home until morning."

"Sir," said I, sadly, "do not jest with the misery of a fellow-creature. I conjure you by the sanctity of your fireside to lend me your night-key."

"You've got one in your hand; why don't you use that?"

I had. In the excitement of the moment I had quite overlooked the fact that, if I had fifty night-keys, I would still have found myself on the wrong side of the door.

"The fact is — pardon me — but I forgot that the door was locked on the inside."

"Well, you can't get in, and you can't stay out," said the stranger, chuckling over a large mouthful of turtle. "What are you going to do?"

"Heaven only knows, unless you are in a position to lend me a dollar, which, sir, I assure you, shall be returned in the morning."

"Nonsense. I never lend money. But if you like, you shall come to my hotel and spend the night there, free of charge."

"What hotel?"

"The Hotel de Coup d'Œil, in Broadway."

"I never heard of such an establishment."

"Perhaps. Nevertheless, it is what is called a first-class hotel."

"Well, but who are you, sir?" I inquired; for, in truth, my suspicions began to be slightly excited by this time. My interlocutor was rather a singular-looking person, as well as I could make out his features in the dusk. Middle height, broad shoulders, and a square, pale face, the upper part of which seemed literally covered with a pair of huge blue spectacles, while the lower portion was hidden in a frizzly beard. A small space on either cheek was all that was uncovered, and that shone white and cold as the snow that lay on the streets. "Who are you, sir?"

"I — I am Count Goloptious, Literary Man, *Bon vivant*, Foreign Nobleman, Linguist, Duellist, Dramatist, and Philanthropist."

"Rather contradictory pursuits, sir," I said, rather puzzled by the man's manner, and wishing to say something.

"Of course. Every man is a mass of contradictions in his present social state."

"But I never heard your name mentioned in the literary world," I remarked. "What have you written?"

"What have I not written? Gory essays upon Kansas for the New York Tribune. Smashing personal articles for the Herald. Carefully constructed non-committal double-reflex-action with escape-movement leaders for the Daily Times; sensation dramas for the Phantom Theatre. Boisterous practical joke comedies for Mr. Behemoth the low comedian; and so on *ad infinitum*."

"Then as a *bon vivant* —?"

"I have been immensely distinguished. When Brillat Savarin was in this country, I invented a dish which nearly killed him. I called it *Surprise des Singes avec petite verole*."

"Linguist?"

"I speak seventeen languages, sir."

"Duellist?"

"I was elected a Member of Congress for South Carolina."

"Philanthropist?"

"Am I not offering to you, a stranger, the hospitality of the Hotel de Coup d'Œil?"

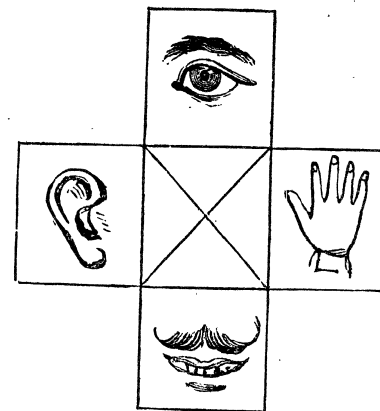
"Enough, sir," I cried; "I accept your offer. I thank you for your timely assistance."

"Then let us go," answered the Count Goloptious, offering me his arm.

II. — THE HOTEL DE COUP D'ŒIL.

THE Count led me out of Bleecker Street into Broadway. We trudged a few blocks in silence, but whether towards Union Square or the Battery I could not for the life of me tell. It seemed as if I had lost all my old landmarks. The remarkable corners and signposts of the great thoroughfare seemed to have vanished.

We stopped at length before a large edifice, built of what seemed at first glance to be a species of variegated marble: on examining more closely, I perceived that every stone in the front of the building was a mosaic, in which was represented one of the four chief organs of the body. The stones were arranged in the form of a cross, with these designs depicted on them.



The effect of the entire front of this huge building, staring at you with a myriad painted eyes, listening to you with a myriad painted ears, beckoning to you with a myriad painted hands, and grinning at you with a myriad painted mouths, was inconceivably strange and bewildering.

"This is the Hotel," said Count Goloptious. "Let us enter."

We passed under a gigantic portal towards two gleaming doors of plate-glass, which voluntarily unclosed as we approached. A magnificent hall lay before us. The pavement was of tessellated marble, on every square of which the strange emblems which decorated the front of the establishment were repeated. From the centre of this vast chamber a spiral staircase arose, from each coil of which small bridges of delicate gilt iron work branched off, and led into what seemed to be the corridors of the building. At one end of the hall stood a curious Oriental-looking structure, within which, seated upon a sort of throne, I beheld a portly bearded personage

whose breast was festooned with gold chains, and whose fingers were covered with rings.

"That is the night clerk," whispered the Count to me, pointing to this person. "Go and enter your name on the book."

I approached the Oriental temple, and, finding a hotel register with leaves of vellum and bound in silver and mother-of-pearl, open on a shelf close by, took up a pen and wrote down my name. The clerk did not even condescend to glance at me, while doing this.

"Would you like some supper?" asked the Count.

"No, no," I answered; "I want only to go to bed." The truth is, the whole scene so bewildered me, that I began to fear that I had gone mad.

"Very well. I will call for your candle." So saying the Count approached a large model of a human ear, which was fixed in the wall of the Oriental temple, and putting his lips to it called out, "A bedroom light for 746."

In an instant a continuous murmur seemed to fill the hall and ascend towards the roof of the building. It appeared to me that ten thousand voices took up the words, "A bedroom light for 746," one after the other, until the sentence rolled along like the fire of a line of infantry. I turned, startled, towards the direction from which those echoes proceeded, and on casting my eyes upon the great spiral staircase beheld the cause.

III. — EYE, EAR, HAND, AND MOUTH.

THE balustrades of the staircase on either side, and the sides of the different galleries branching off, were all decorated with two of the mystical emblems I had before seen so often repeated in this strange hotel. On the one side a line of human mouths ran up the edges of the staircase, while on the other a line of human hands occupied a corresponding position. There was, however, this difference between them and the symbols occupying the front of the establishment. They were all modelled in high relief. The balus-

trades seemed as if they had been decorated with the pillage of numberless anatomical museums. As I turned suddenly and glanced towards the staircase, I saw the lips of those ten thousand mouths moving, and whispering softly but distinctly the words, "A bedroom light for 746."

I had scarcely recovered from the astonishment with which this sight overwhelmed me, and the rolling whisper had hardly died away in the domed roof of the hall, when my attention was attracted by a speck of light which appeared far away up on the staircase, and seemed to be travelling slowly down the huge spiral. I watched it with a sort of stupid interest, and when it came nearer discovered that it was nothing less than a chamber wax-light in a silver candlestick, which the ten thousand hands that lined the edge of the balustrade opposite to the balustrade of the mouths were carefully passing from one to the other. In a few moments it reached the bottom, where the last hand, a huge muscular-looking fist, held it.

"There is your light," said the Count; "follow it up stairs, and it will lead you to your room. I will, for the present, wish you a good-night, as I have to go and take my before-morning walk."

I confusedly wished my strange friend good night, and walked towards the hand that held my candle. As I approached, the hand passed it to the hand next above, and the candle so began to ascend the stairs. I followed. After toiling up an interminable number of steps, the hands suddenly took the candle off into one of the side galleries, in which at last it stopped before a huge polished door, on the upper panels of which were painted again a huge eye and an equally gigantic ear. I could not help noticing that the eye had a demoniac expression.

I pushed the door open, and, taking the candle from the attendant hand, was about to enter the room, when my attention was attracted by that member giving my coat a gentle twitch. I turned, and there beheld the hand stretched out with an expression—if ever hand had an expression—which was inexpressibly pleading. I

was puzzled. What could it want? I would follow the example of my friend Count Goloptious, and speak to the ear. Approaching my lips to the ear painted over my door, I put the question, "What does this amiable hand want?" In an instant a fusillade of whispers came rolling up the line of mouths, answering, "He wants a quarter for his trouble." My heart sank, — I had only five cents.

"Pshaw!" said I, trying to bluff the thing off, "I can't attend to it now"; and so saying, stepped towards my room. As I entered and hurriedly closed the door, I beheld every hand down the long coil of stairs simultaneously double up and shake at me in menace, while a horrid sardonic laugh ran down the line of mouths. I never beheld anything more devilish than that spiral smile of scorn.

On closing the door of my room, I was not a little annoyed to find that the eye and the ear, which were on the outside, were on the inside also, so exactly alike that they seemed to have come through for the purpose of watching me, and listening to my sleep-talk. I felt wretchedly uncomfortable at the idea of undressing before that eye. It was fixed on me wherever I moved in the room. I tried to pin a handkerchief over it, but the wood of the door was too hard and the pins would not stick. As the handkerchief fell to the ground, I beheld the horrid eye wink at me with a devilish expression of derision. Determined not to be overlooked, I put out the light and undressed in the dark, when I tumbled into bed in a state of confusion of mind not easily described. I had scarcely laid my head on the pillow, when I heard a distinct knock at my door. Cursing the intrusion, and not without some tremor, being uncertain what new enchantment might be brewing, I opened it. There was the hand outstretched, and pleading for its infernal quarter. The abominable member was evidently determined to keep me awake all night. There was but one thing to be done, — to bribe him with a promise. I put my lips to the ear and said: "If the hand does not disturb me, I will put a gold ring on his finger to-morrow."

The ten thousand mouths repeated with tones of approval, "He will put a gold ring on his finger to-morrow," and the ten thousand hands waved their thanks. I shut my door, congratulating myself on my escape, and, flinging myself on the bed, soon fell fast asleep.

IV. — DR. KITCHENER IN A DREAM.

A HORRIBLE heat seemed to surround my head. I suffered intolerable agony. Count Goloptious had unscrewed my caput just at the point known to anatomists as the condyles, and deliberately placed it in the centre of a ring of burning brands which he had laid on the floor. The Philanthropic Duellist then drew a volume from his pocket, which, even in my excited condition, I could not help recognizing as Doctor Kitchener's cookery-book, and commenced deliberately to read aloud the recipe for roasting a goose alive, which is contained in that immortal work. I now perceived with unutterable indignation that he intended to cook my head after Kitchener's inhuman instructions.

The flames leaped higher and higher around my blistering cheeks. My whiskers — whiskers on which countless barbers had exhausted the resources of their art — shrivelled into ashy nothings. My eyeballs protruded, my lips cracked; my tongue, hard and wooden, beat against the roof of my mouth. I uttered a half-inarticulate cry for water. The Count laughed a devilish laugh, and consulted his book.

"True," he said, "the worthy doctor says, that when the goose thirsteth let her be fed with water, so that the flesh shall be tender when cooked. Let us give the poor head a drink."

So saying, he reached towards my parched lips a pannikin fixed on the end of a long handle. I quaffed eagerly the liquor which it contained. Ah! how grateful was that draught of brandy-and-water! I drained the cup to the bottom. But the bliss was short-lived. The flames hissed and crackled. My hair caught fire, and my poor head blazed like a Frenchman's "ponch-bol." The spar-

kles from the burning brands flew against my forehead and into my eyes, scorching and blinding me. My brain simmered in the arched cells of my skull. My anguish was insufferable, and as a last desperate resource I cried out to the Count: "Take me from the fire, — take me from the fire, — I am overdone!"

The Count answered to this: "Patience, patience, head of a heathen! You are roasting beautifully. A few minutes more, and I will pour some Worcestershire sauce over you."

Worcestershire sauce! That essence of every peppery condiment known to civilized man! Worcestershire sauce, the delight of East Indian officers on half-pay, and the horror of Frenchmen who encounter it in London restaurants, and return to "La Belle" with excoriated palates; this biting, inflammatory stuff to be poured over a wretched head, whose scalp was cracking like the skin of a roasted apple, — it was too much to endure, so I gave vent to my feelings in one unearthly shriek of agony and — awoke.

My head was hot, but, thank Heaven, it was not roasting. It was lying on a tumbled pillow across which a stream of the morning sunlight was pouring in a golden tide. There was no Count Golopious, — no circle of firebrands, — no Worcestershire sauce, — I was in bed, and alone in the Hotel de Coup d'Œil.

So soon as I had sufficiently recovered from the effects of my horrible dream, I sat up in bed, and inspected my apartment. It was large and lofty and sumptuously furnished. A touching attention to my necessities was visible as I glanced round the room. By my bedside, on a small buhl table, stood a large tumbler containing a creaming champagne cocktail. I drained it as a libation to the God of Morning. It was an appropriate sacrifice. The early sunlight itself seemed to flash through its amber globules. The white foam of dawn creamed in its effervescence. The tonic flavor of the fresh air that blows over the awaking earth was represented by the few drops of Boker's bitters with which it was tinctured. The immediate glow which it sent through every limb typified the healthy circulation produced by morning exercise.

I lay back on my pillow and began to speculate on the strange series of incidents which had befallen me. Who was Count Golopious? What weird hotel was this, of which I had become an inmate? Were the days of enchantment indeed revived? or did I merely dream of those myriads of beseeching hands and whispering mouths and ever-wakeful eyes?

I glanced involuntarily to the door at this juncture, and lo! there I beheld the eye which seemed set in the panel of my door. A full flood of the sunlight that poured across my bed struck across that side of my room, and I saw the eye winking drowsily in the blaze, — drowsily, but yet wakefully, like one who is accustomed to watch between sleeping and waking; a sentinel which was never entirely somnolent.

The eye was watching me, despite the sleepy film with which it was overspread. Did I make any abrupt movement in the bed, its half-closed lid suddenly opened, and stared at me with appalling vigilance. There was no avoiding it. It commanded every corner of the room.

How was I to rise and attire myself, with so unpleasant a supervision? I had no longer the resource of extinguishing the light. The sun was beyond the reach of such a process. I meditated for a while, and at length hit upon the idea of constructing a species of wigwam out of the bedclothes, and dressing myself under its shelter. This I accomplished all the more easily, as I had laid my clothes, on retiring to rest, within easy reach of the bed; and as I constructed my impromptu tent, I thought I could discern an expression of drowsy disappointment shooting from underneath the half-closed lid of the Sentinel Eye.

V. — HOW I MAGNETIZED MY EYE.

HAVING finished my toilet sufficiently to justify my stepping from my bed, I was proceeding with my ablutions, when I heard a few chords struck upon a piano, in what seemed to be the next

apartment. The moment after, a rich, luxurious contralto voice commenced to sing Schubert's beautiful serenade. I listened entranced. It seemed as if Alboni herself were singing. Those showers of rich, round notes falling in rhythmical sequence; that *sostenuto*, that, when first uttered, seemed a sound too weak to live, but growing and swelling every moment until it filled all the air with delicious sound, and then lessening and lessening till it almost died away, like distant music heard across the sea at night; those firm accentuations; the precision of those vocal descents, when the voice seemed to leap from the pinnacles of the gamut with the surety and fearlessness of a chamois-hunter leaping from Alpine peaks; — all told me that I was listening to a queen of song.

I ran to the window of my room, and, opening it, thrust my head forth. There was a window next to mine, but I could see nothing. The blinds were down, but I could feel the glass panes vibrating with that wondrous tide of song.

A woman, — a great singer, — the greatest I had ever heard, lived next to me. What was she like? That heavenly voice could never come from a lean and withered chest, from a skeleton throat. She must be young, must be lovely. I determined on the instant to form her acquaintance.

But there was the Sentinel Eye! How to evade the vigilance of that abominable optic? Its horrible magnetic gaze followed me in every motion that I made. Magnetic gaze! There was an idea. It was doubtless an enchanted eye; but was there any enchantment that could stand against the human will? I was strong, body and soul. My magnetic power I had frequently proved to be of the highest force; why not exercise it on my sentinel? I resolved to attempt to magnetize The Eye!

I shut the window, and, taking a chair, seated myself opposite the demoniac optic. I fixed my eyes upon it, and, concentrating all the will of which I was master, sent a powerful magnetic current straight to the centre of the glaring pupil. It would be a desperate struggle, I knew, but I was determined not to succumb. The Eye became uneasy. It glanced hither and thither, and seemed to wish

to avoid my gaze. The painted eyelids drooped; the devilish pupil contracted and dilated, but still the orb always had to return and meet mine.

Presently the glaze of a magnetic sleep began to overspread it. The scintillating lights that played within grew dim. The lid drooped, and, after lifting once or twice, I beheld the long, dark lashes fall, and slumber veiled my sentinel.

VI. — FAIR ROSAMOND.

No sooner was the Sentinel Eye fairly magnetized than I hastened to the window and flung it open. I possess a tolerable tenor voice, and as I thought vocalism was the simplest way of attracting the attention of the fair unknown, I sang the first verse of the charming serenade in the Knight of Arva; a melody full of grace and passion, for which Mr. Glover never obtained sufficient commendation. I had hardly concluded the first verse when I heard the neighboring window uncloset. Unable to restrain my curiosity, I thrust my head out of my casement. Almost at the same instant a lovely face emerged from the window on the right. I had just time to get a flash of a glorious blond head, when the apparition disappeared. My head went in also. I waited a few moments, then cautiously, and after the manner of a turtle, protruded my caput once more. The Blond Head was out, but went in again like a flash. I remained with outstretched neck. After a brief pause I saw a gleam of fair curls. Then a white forehead, then a nose *retroussé*, then an entire face. I instantly withdrew into my shell. The Blond Head was timid, and I wished to encourage it.

Have you ever seen those philosophical toys which are constructed for the purpose of telling whether the day will be rainy or shiny? No. Then I will describe one to you.

There is a rustic house with two portals, one on either side. In the portal on the right a little man is concealed; in the portal on

the left, a woman. They are both connected with a vertical coil of catgut, which runs from the base to the roof of the house, between the two. In dry weather the catgut relaxes, and the little man, by the action of such relaxation, is swung out of his portal into the open air. In wet weather the catgut contracts, and the woman enjoys the atmosphere. This toy has two advantages. One is, that it is infallible in its predictions, as it never announces fine weather until the weather is already fine; the other, that it affords an admirable illustration of the present social state of woman. When the day of storm arrives, in goes the man to his comfortable shelter, and out comes the woman to brave the elements. How many households does this typify! In sunshine and summer weather the husband is a charming fellow, and flaunts abroad in all his splendor; but when the clouds gather, when the fire goes out on the hearth for want of fuel, and duns are at the door, then poor woman is sent out to meet them, while the lord of creation hides in the cellar. I commend the toy to the consideration of Miss Lucy Stone.

Well, the Blond Head and myself played at weather-telling for five minutes. No sooner was one in than the other was out. It was a game of "tee to—tottering" performed after a new fashion. I resolved to put an end to it.

I gave three distinct hems.

There is a good deal of expression in a "hem." There is the hem of alarm, such as Alexis gives to Corydon, who is flirting in the garden with Phillis, when that young lady's mother is approaching. There is the hem of importance, such as that with which old Beeswax, the merchant, who is "worth his million, sir," prefaces a remark: the hem of confusion, — the hem of derision or unbelief, — the hem of satisfaction, — the hem of disappointment, — in short, a whole circle or hemmysphere of hems, each expressive in its way of a peculiar emotion. My hem was the hem of interrogation.

It was answered, and the next moment the Blond Head hovered, as it were, on the window-sill. It looked like a bird whose cage door has been opened after years of captivity, and who flutters on the threshold, not daring to advance into the free air.

I advanced my head boldly, and caught the Blond Head on the wing. It was retreating after the usual fashion, and with the usual rapidity, when I shot it with the word, —

"Stay!"

It fluttered for an instant, and then remained still.

"We are neighbors," I remarked to the Blond Head. It was a truism, I know, but still it was a remark. After all, what does it matter what you say to most women, so that what you say is a remark?

"So I perceive," answered the Head, still fluttering a little.

"May I have the honor of knowing —" I commenced.

"Certainly," interrupted the Blond Head, "I am Rosamond."

"The fair Rosamond, I see," I interposed, in my gallantest manner.

"Yes," replied Rosamond, with wonderful *naïveté*, "fair perhaps, but very unhappy."

"Unhappy! How? Can I relieve you, — be of any service?"

A glance of suspicion was shot at me from a pair of large, lustrous blue eyes.

"Are you not one of his satellites?" asked the Blond Head.

"I a satellite?" I answered indignantly, — "I am no one's satellite, — unless indeed it be yours," I added; "for I would gladly revolve round so fair a planet."

"Then you are not a friend of Count Goloptious?"

"No. I never saw him until last night. He brought me to this hotel, where I have been bewildered by enchantments."

"All my doing! all my doing!" cried Rosamond, wringing her hands.

"How your doing?" I inquired, with some astonishment.

"I am the artist, — the fatal, the accursed artist. It was I who painted, I who modelled."

"Painted, modelled what?"

"Hush! you can save me, perhaps. I will see you again to-day. Is not the Eye watching you?"

"I have magnetized it."

"Good! you are a clever fellow," and Rosamond's eyes sparkled. "You must help me to escape."

"From what?"

"I will tell you—but quick! shut your window. Count Goloptious is coming."

The Blond Head gave me a sweet smile, and retreated. I did likewise, and closed my window. The next moment my door opened, and Count Goloptious entered.

VII. — THREE COLUMNS A DAY.

COUNT GOLOPTIOUS entered. He seemed somewhat agitated, and banged the door to loudly. The shock dispelled the magnetic slumber of the Sentinel Eye, which suddenly opened its heavy lid and glared around with an expression which seemed to say, "I'd like to catch anybody saying that I have been asleep!"

"Sir," said the Count, "you have been misconducting yourself."

"I? Misconducting myself! What do you mean, Count Goloptious?"

"You have been singing love-songs, sir. In a tenor voice, too. If you were a bass I would not so much care, but to sing tenor,—it's infamous!"

The blue goggles of the Count seemed to scintillate with anger as he glared at me.

"What the devil is the meaning of all this mystery?" I demanded angrily, for I really was getting savage at the incomprehensibility of everything that surrounded me. "What do your infernal eyes and hands and ears and mouths mean? If you are a nightmare, why don't you say so, and let me wake up? Why can't I sing love-songs if I like,—and in a tenor voice, if I like? I'll sing alto if I choose, Count Goloptious."

"It is not for you to penetrate the mysteries of the Hotel de Coup d'Œil, sir," answered the Count. "You have enjoyed its hospitalities, and you can go. You have sung tenor songs, sir. You

know, as well as I, the influence of the tenor voice upon the female heart. You are familiar with the history of the opera, sir. You have beheld penniless Italians, with curled mustaches, and with no earthly attraction except a peculiar formation of the windpipe, wreck the peace of the loveliest of our females. There is a female in this vicinity, sir. A poor, weak-minded girl, who has been placed under my guardianship, and who is crazy on the subject of music. You have been singing to her, sir. Yes, with that accursed mellifluous voice of yours,—that vocal honey in which you tenors administer the poison of your love,—with that voice, sir, you are endeavoring to destroy the peace of mind of my ward. You have slept here, sir. You can go now."

"I have not the slightest intention of going now, Count Goloptious. This hotel suits me admirably well. It has certain little drawbacks to be sure. It is not pleasant to be always overlooked and overheard in one's privacy." Here I pointed to the Ear and the Eye. "But still one can grow accustomed to that, I suppose. By the way, I should like some breakfast."

My coolness took the Count completely by surprise. He stared at me without being able to utter a word. The fact was, that the Blond Head had bewitched me. Those clouds of golden hair that enfolded the wondrous oval of her face like a continual sunset had set my heart on fire. Never, never would I quit that hotel, unless I bore her with me. She had hinted at misfortune in our brief interview. She was a captive,—a captive of the false Count, who now pretended that he was her guardian. Meshed in the countless spells and enchantments that surrounded her, she was helpless as those fair creatures we read of in the Arabian Nights. I would be her rescuer. I would discover the charm before which the bonds should melt. It was Andromache and Perseus and the sea-monster over again, in the year 1858. The Count, it is needless to say, was the monster. I had no Medusan shield, it is true, but I felt powerful as Perseus, for all that. My blond Andromache should be saved.

"So you won't go, eh?" said Goloptious, after a long silence.

"No."

"You had better."

"This is a hotel. I have a right to accommodation here as long as I pay for it. Hotels belong to the public, when the public has money."

"I know I can't force you to go, but I don't think, young sir, that you will be able to pay for your board."

"How much do you charge here, by the day?"

"Three columns a day."

"Three what?"

"Three columns a day."

"I have heard of pillar dollars, but hang me if I ever heard of money that was called columns."

"We don't take money in pay at the Hotel de Coup d'Œil. Brain is the only currency that passes here. You must write me three columns of the best literary matter every day; those are our terms for this room. We have rooms higher up which rent for less. Some go as low as a paragraph. This is a four-column room usually, but you can have it for three."

Was the fellow laughing at me? His countenance was perfectly serious the whole time he was speaking. He talked as deliberately as if he had been a simple hotel clerk talking to a traveller, who was about pricing rooms. The whole thing struck me so comically that I could not refrain from a smile. I determined to carry the thing out in the Count's own vein.

"Meals are of course included?" I said inquiringly.

"Certainly, and served in your own room."

"I don't think the apartment dear," I continued, inspecting my chamber with a critical eye. "I'll take it."

"Very good"; and I saw a gleam of gratified malice shoot through the Count's great blue goggles.

"Now," said I, "perhaps you will inform me, Count Goloptious, why a few moments since you were so anxious to get rid of me, and why now you so tranquilly consent to my remaining an inmate of the Hotel de Coup d'Œil?"

"I have my reasons," said the Count, mysteriously. "You have now taken a room in the Hotel de Coup d'Œil; you will never quit it unless with my consent. The Eye shall watch you, the Ear shall hear you, the Hands shall detain you, the Mouths shall betray you; work is henceforth your portion. Your brain is my property; you shall spin it out as the spider his web, until you spin out your life with it. I have a lien on your intellect. There is one of my professions which I omitted in the catalogue which I gave you on our first meeting, — I am a Publisher!"

VIII. — THE BLOND HEAD.

THIS last speech of the Count's, I confess, stunned me. He was then a publisher. I, who for years had been anxiously keeping my individuality as an author intact, who had been strenuously avoiding the vortex of the literary whirlpool of which the publisher is the centre, who had resisted, successfully, the absorbing process by which that profession succeeds in sucking the vitals out of the literary man, now suddenly found myself on the outer edge of the maelstrom, slowly but surely revolving towards the central funnel which was to swallow me.

An anticipation of unknown misfortunes seemed to overwhelm me. There was something sternly prophetic in the last tones of Goloptious's voice. He seemed to have had no turtle in his throat for several days. He was harsh and strident.

I determined to consult with the Blond Head in my extremity. It would, at least, be a consolation to me to gaze into those wondrous blue eyes, to bask in the sunshine of that luminous hair.

I raised my window, and hummed a bar of *Com'e Gentil*. In a moment the adjoining window was raised, and out came the Blond Head. The likeness to the weather-toy existed no longer: both our heads were out together.

"You have seen Goloptious," said the Blond Head. "What did he say?"

"Excuse me from continuing the conversation just at this moment," I replied. "I have forgotten something."

I had. The Ear and the Eye were in full play, — one watching, the other listening. Such witnesses must be disposed of, if I was to hold any secret conversation with Rosamond. I retired therefore into my chamber again, and set to work to deliberately magnetize the eye. That organ did not seem to relish the operation at all, but it had no resource. In a few moments the film overspread it, and it closed. But what was to be done with the ear? I could not magnetize that. If, like the king in Hamlet, I had only a little poison to pour into it, I might deafen it forever. Or, like the sailors of Ulysses, when passing the island of the Sirens — ah! Ulysses! — that was the idea. Stop up the ear with wax! My bedroom candle was not all burned out. To appropriate a portion of that luminary, soften it in my hands, and plaster it over the auricular organ on my door was the work of a few moments. It was a triumph of strategy. Both my enchanted guardians completely entrapped, and by what simple means!

I now resumed my out-of-window conversation with Rosamond with a feeling of perfect security.

"I have seen Goloptious," I said, in reply to her previous question, "and am now a boarder in the Hotel de Coup d'Œil."

"Great heavens, then you are lost!" exclaimed Rosamond, shaking her cloudy curls at me.

"Lost! How so?"

"Simply that you are the slave of Goloptious. He will live on your brains, until every fibre is dried up. You will become a mental atrophy, — and, alas! worse."

"What do you mean? Explain, for Heaven's sake. You mystify me."

"I cannot explain. But we must endeavor to escape. You are ingenious and bold. I saw that by the manner in which you overcame the Sentinel Eye by magnetism. This hotel is a den of enchantments. I have been confined here for over a year. My profession is that of a sculptor, and I have been forced to model

all those demon hands and mouths and ears with which the building is so thickly sown. Those weird glances that strike through the countless corridors from the myriad eyes are of my painting. Those ten thousand lips that fill this place with unearthly murmurs are born of my fingers. It is I, who, under the relentless sway of Goloptious, have erected those enchanted symbols of which you are the victim. I knew not what I did, when I made those things. But you can evade them all. We can escape, if you will only set your ingenuity to work."

"But, really, I see nothing to prevent our walking down stairs."

"There is everything. You cannot move in this house without each motion being telegraphed. The Hands that line the staircase would clutch your skirts and hold you firm prisoner, were you to attempt to leave."

"The Hands be — dished!" I exclaimed.

At this moment there came a knock. I hastily drew my head in, and opened my door. I beheld the Hand of the night before, pleadingly extended; and at the same moment a running fire of murmurs from the Mouths informed me that he wanted the gold ring I had promised him. It was evident that this infernal hand would dun me to all eternity, unless he was paid.

I rushed to the window in my despair.

"Rosamond! fair Rosamond!" I shouted. "Have you got a gold ring?"

"Certainly," answered the Blond Head, appearing.

"Stretch as far as you can out of your window and hand it to me."

"Alas, I cannot stretch out of the window."

"Why not?"

"Do not ask me, — oh! do not ask me," answered the Blond Head, with so much anguish in her tones that I inwardly cursed myself for putting so beautiful a creature to pain.

"But," I continued, "if I reach over to you with a pair of tongs, will you give it to me?"

"O, with pleasure!" and the Blond Head smiled a seraphic smile.

A pair of tongs being adjacent, a plain gold ring was quickly transferred from Rosamond's slender finger to my hand. With much ceremony I proceeded to place it on the smallest finger of the Hand, not being able, however, to get it farther than the first joint. Even this partial decoration seemed however to meet with approval, for the ten thousand hands commenced applauding vigorously, so much so that for a moment I fancied myself at the opera.

"Good heavens!" I thought, "what a *claque* these hands would make!"

There was one thing, however, that puzzled me much as I re-entered my room.

Why was it that Fair Rosamond could not lean out of the window? There was some mystery about it, I felt certain. I little thought in what manner or how soon that mystery was to be solved.

IX. — ROSAMOND MAKES A GREEN BIRD.

No sooner was my debt to the Hand thus satisfactorily acquitted, than, in the elation of the moment at having for the first time in my life paid a debt on the appointed day, I immediately applied my lips to the Ear on the inside, and communicated my desire for some pens, ink, and paper. In an incredibly short space of time, the Hands, doubtless stimulated by the magnificence of my reward, passed a quantity of writing materials up the stairs, and in a few moments I was at work on my three columns, being determined from that time not to fall into arrears for my board.

"It is of the utmost importance," I thought, "that I should be unfettered by pecuniary liabilities, if I would rescue Rosamond from the clutches of this vile Count. I feel convinced of being able to baffle all his enchantments. Yes, Hands, ye may close, Ears, ye may listen, Eyes, ye may watch, Mouths, ye may scream the alarm, but I will deceive ye all! There is no magician who can out-conjure the imagination of man."

Having mentally got rid of this fine sentence, I set myself regu-

larly to work, and in a short space of time dashed off a stunning article on the hotel system of England as contrasted with that of America. If that paper was ever printed, it must have astonished the reader; for written as it was, under the influence of the enchantments of the Hotel de Coup d'Œil, it mixed up the real and the ideal in so inextricable a manner, that it read somewhat like a fusion of alternate passages from Murray's guide-book and the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. Such as it was, however, it being finished, I folded it up and sent it by the Hand, with my compliments to Count Goloptious, begging that he should at the same time be informed that I was hungry, and wanted my breakfast. My message whirled along the ten thousand Mouths, and faded away down into the hall below.

I had scarcely re-entered my apartment when I heard the Blond Head open the window, and commence singing a strange wild sort of recitative, evidently with the view of attracting my attention. I listened, and found that it ran thus:—

Rosamond sings: "I have a bird, a bright green bird, who was born to-day.

"To-day the sunshine entered him through his eyes; his glittering wings rustled in the breath of the warm noon, and he began to live.

"He is merry and bold and wise, and is versed in the mysteries that are sung by the Unseen Spirits.

"Yet he knows not the mystical joys of the silently growing forests.

"No egg ever contained him.

"No down, white and silken, ever sheltered him from the cold.

"No anxious, bright-eyed mother ever brought him the oily grain of the millet to eat, or sat on the neighboring tree-tops, singing the holy hymns of maternal love.

"He never heard the sonorous melodies of the trees, when the wind with rushing fingers strikes the various notes of the forest, and Ash and Oak, Alder and Pine, are blent in the symphonic chords of the storm.

"Ten white fingers made him.

"The great sun — too far away to know what it was doing — hatched him into life, and in the supreme moment when his little heart just commenced to beat, and his magical blood to ebb and flow through the mystic cells of his frame, his maker cast from her lips, through his gaping golden bill, a stream of song, and gifted him with voice.

"This is the bird, bold and merry and wise, who will shake my salvation from his wings.

"Ah! until the hour of my delivery arrives, he shall be fed daintily on preserved butterflies, and shall scrape his bill on a shell of pearl!"

I opened my window as the last words of this strange song died away, and I had scarcely done so when a bright green bird, with an orange bill and cinnamon-colored legs, flew from Rosamond's window into my room, and perched on the table. It was a charming bird. Its shape was somewhat like that of the mocking-bird, — long, slender body, piquant head, and sweeping tail. Its color was of the most dazzling green, and its feathers shone like satin.

"Good morning, pretty bird," said I, holding out my finger to my visitor, who immediately flew to my hand and established himself there.

"Good morning," answered the Green Bird, in a voice so like Rosamond's that I was startled; "I am come to breakfast with you."

As the Green Bird spoke, a small bright feather dropped from its wing and fell slowly to the ground.

"I am delighted to have your society," I replied, with the utmost courtesy, "but I fear that I shall not be able to offer you any preserved butterflies. Nay, I have not as much as a beetle in pickle."

"Don't mention it," said the bird, with an off-hand flirt of his tail; "I can put up with anything. Besides, you know, one can always fall back on eggs."

To my surprise another bright green feather disengaged itself from the bird's plumage, and floated softly towards the carpet.

"Why, you'll lose all your feathers," said I. "Are you moulting?"

"No," answered the bird, "but I am gifted with speech on the condition that I shall lose a feather every time I use the faculty. When I lose all my feathers, which I calculate will not take place for about a year, I shall invent some artificial ornithological covering."

"Gracious!" I exclaimed, "what a figure — of speech you will be!"

At this moment the usual knock was heard at my door, on opening which I discovered a large tray covered with a snowy cloth, on which were placed a number of small porcelain covers, some bottles of red and white wine, a silver coffee-service, in short, everything necessary for a good breakfast.

X. — BREAKFAST, ORNITHOLOGICALLY CONSIDERED.

In a few moments my repast was arranged on the table, at which I seated myself, the Green Bird perching on the edge of a pretty dish of scarlet fruits at which he pecked, occasionally moistening his golden bill in the slender glass of Barsac which I placed near him.

"Breakfast," said the bird, looking at me with a glance of undisguised contempt while I was devouring a plate of *rognons au vin de champagne*, — "breakfast is a meal utterly misinterpreted by human beings. What can be more unhealthy or more savage than the English or American breakfast? The latter is a miracle of indigestibility. The elastic, hot cakes. The tough, over-cooked meats. The half-boiled, muddy coffee. The half-baked, alum-tempered bread. Breakfast should be a light meal, invigorating, yet not overloading, — fruits to purify the palate and the physical system, and a little red wine to afford nourishment to the frame, and enable it to go through the work of the day. In the morning man arises refreshed, not exhausted; his frame needs but little support; it is only when the animal vitality has been used up by a hard

day's labor, that the meal of succulent and carbonized food is required. The French make their breakfast too elaborate; the English too heavy; the Americans too indigestible."

"Am I to understand, then," I asked, "that birds breakfast more sensibly than men?"

"Certainly," replied the Green Bird. "What is more delicate, and at the same time more easy of digestion, than the mucilaginous Caterpillar? The Dragon-fly, when carefully stripped of its corselet, is the lobster of the Insectivora. The green *acarus* is a dainty morsel, and the yellow roses sigh with relief when we gobble up their indolent enemy. The *coccinella*, or Lady-bird, is our turtle: with what dexterity is he stript of his upper shell and eaten palpitating!

"But the chief hygienic feature about the breakfast of us birds is, that we exercise in order that we may eat. Supposing the Blackbird, on withdrawing his head from under his crimson epaulet in the early morning, were merely to yawn, and stretch his wings, and, hopping lazily down branch by branch to the pool at the bottom of the tree on which he roosts, take his bath. That finished, we will suppose him retreating to his covert, when he rings a bell made of the blue campanula, and, being answered by an attendant Tom Tit, commands breakfast to be served. Tom Tit disappears, and after the usual absence returns with a meal of beetles, caterpillars, ripe cherries, and wild honey, neatly served on a satiny leaf of the Maple. Blackbird falls to and gorges himself. What an unhealthy bird he would be, compared with the Blackbird as he really is, stretching his wings at the first light of dawn, and setting off on a foraging expedition through the woods and fields! What glorious exercise and excitement there are in this chase after a breakfast! How all the physical powers are cultivated! The sight is sharpened. There is not a cranny in the bark of a tree, or a crevice in the earth, that the eye of the hungry bird does not penetrate. The extremest tip of the tail of a burrowing worm cannot remain undiscovered; he is whipped out and eaten in a moment. Then the long flight through the fresh air; the delicious draught of cool dew taken from time to time; the —"

"But," said I, interrupting the Green Bird, who I began to perceive was an interminable talker, "how is it possible for men to have the opportunity of pursuing their meals in the manner you describe? It would indeed present rather a ridiculous appearance, if at six o'clock in the morning I were to sally out, and run all over the fields turning up stones in order to find fried smelts, and diving into a rabbit burrow in the hope of discovering mutton chops *en papillotes*."

"If I were a man," said the Green Bird, sententiously, "I would have my meals carefully concealed by the servants in various places, and then set to work to hunt them out. It would be twice as healthy as the present indolent method."

Here he took another sip at the Barsac, and looked at me so queerly that I began to have a shrewd suspicion that he was drunk. A brilliant idea here flashed across my mind. I would intoxicate the Green Bird, and worm out of him the reason why it was that the Blond Head was never able to stretch farther out of her window than the shoulders. The comicality of a drunken bird also made me favorable to the idea.

"As far as eating goes," said I, "I think that you are perhaps right; but as to drinking, you surely will not compare your insipid dew to a drink like this!" and, as I spoke, I poured out a glass of Richebourg, and handed it to the bird.

He dipped his bill gravely in it, and took one or two swallows.

"It is a fine wine," he said sententiously, "but it has a strong body. I prefer the Barsac. The red wine seems to glow with the fires of earth, but the white wine seems illumined by the sunlight of heaven."

And the Green Bird returned to his Barsac.

XI. — LEG-BAIL.

"So the fair Rosamond made you," I said carelessly.

"Yes, from terra-cotta," answered the Green Bird; "and, having

been baked and colored, I came to life in the sun. I love this white wine, because the sun, who is my father, is in it"; and he took another deep draught.

"What induced her to construct you?" I asked.

"Why, with a view of escaping from this place, of course."

"O, then you are to assist her to escape?"

"Not at all, — you are to assist her. I will furnish her with the means."

"What means?"

"With the wings."

"The what?" I asked, somewhat astonished.

"The wings!"

"What the deuce does she want of wings? She is not going to escape by the window, is she?"

"Ha, ha, ha! Ho, ho, ho! He asks what Rosamond wants of wings!" And the bird, overcome with laughter at the ludicrousness of some esoteric jest, tumbled into his glass of Barsac, from which I rescued him draggled and dripping, all the more draggled as during our conversation he had been continually shedding his feathers.

"Well, what does she want of wings?" I asked, rather angrily, because a man does not like to see people laughing at a joke into the secret of which he is not admitted.

"To fly with," replied the Green Bird, nearly choking with the involuntary draught of white wine he had swallowed during his immersion.

"But why does she want to fly?"

"Because she has no legs, — that's the reason she wants to fly," said the bird, a little crossly.

"No legs!" I repeated, appalled at this awful intelligence, — "no legs! O, nonsense! you must be joking."

"No, I'm choking," answered the Green Bird.

"Why, she is like Miss Biffin, then, born without legs. Heavens! what a pity that so lovely a head shouldn't have a leg to stand on!"

"She was n't born without legs," replied the Bird. "Her legs are down stairs."

"You don't mean to say that they have been amputated?"

"No. Count Goloptious was afraid she would escape; and as he wanted only her bust, that is, her brain, hands, and arms, he just took her legs away and put them in the store-room. He'll take your legs away some day, too, you'll find. He wants nothing but heads in this hotel."

"Never!" I exclaimed, horror-stricken at the idea. "Sooner than part with my legs, I'd —"

"Take arms against him I suppose. Well, *nous verrons*. Gracious! what a lot of feathers I have shed!" suddenly continued the Bird, looking down at a whole pile of green feathers that lay on the floor. "I'm talking too much. I sha'n't have a feather left soon if I go on at this rate. By the way, where is your mirror? I must reproduce myself."

XII. — HOLDING THE MIRROR UP TO NATURE.

I HANDED the Green Bird a small dressing-glass which lay on the bureau, — I mean, I placed it before him, for the impossibility of *handing* a bird anything will strike even the most uncultivated mind, — and seated myself to watch his proceedings with a considerable amount of curiosity.

I wish, before proceeding any further, to make a few random remarks on the looking-glass in America.

I take a certain natural pride in my personal appearance. It is of no consequence if my nose is a trifle too long, my chin too retreating, or my head too angular. I flatter myself that the elegance of a man's appearance does not depend on his individual traits, but upon his *tout ensemble*. I feel, when regarding myself in a well-constituted mirror, that, in spite of any trifling defects in detail, my figure on the whole is rather *distingué*.

In the matter of mirrors, I have suffered. The hotel and board-

ing-house keepers of this country — actuated doubtless by a wholesome desire to crush that pet fly called "vanity," with which the Devil angles for human souls — have, I am convinced, entered into a combination against the admiration of the human face divine by its owner.

Like Proteus, I find myself changing my shape wherever I go. At the Bunkum House, I am a fat boy. At the St. Bobolink, a living skeleton. Once I was seriously alarmed on inspecting myself for the first time in the glass, — on an occasion when I had just taken possession of a new boarding-house, — at discovering that one of my eyebrows was in the middle of my forehead. I had been informed by a medical student, — since plucked, — from whom I derived most of my surgical information, that paralysis not unfrequently produced such effects. I descended in some trepidation to the parlor, where I had an interesting interview with my landlady, who succeeded in removing the unpleasant impression from my mind that I was a victim to that unbecoming disease.

The glass was not, however, changed, and I never looked in it and beheld that eyebrow in the middle of my forehead, without the disagreeable sensation that in the end I should die a Cyclops.

The glass which I placed before the Green Bird possessed, I regret to say, certain defects in the plane of its surface, which rendered self-contemplation by its aid anything but an agreeable occupation. I know no man egotist enough to — as the novels say — "spend hours before" such a mirror.

The Green Bird, as soon as he beheld himself in this abominable mirror, uttered a scream of disgust. I must say, that, on looking over his shoulder, the image formed by him in the glass was not a graceful one. He was humped, one leg was shorter than the other, and his neck looked as if it had just been wrung by a school-boy.

What attracted my attention most, however, were certain peculiarities in the reflected image itself. It scarcely seemed a reflection. It was semi-substantial, and stood out from the surface of the glass in a sort of half-relief, that grew more and more positive every moment. In a few seconds more, the so-called image detached

itself from the mirror, and hopped out on the table, a perfect counterpart of the Green Bird, only humped, with one leg shorter than the other, and a wry neck. It was an ornithological caricature.

The Green Bird itself now sidled away from its position before the mirror, and the Caricature Bird took his place. If the image cast by the former was distorted, no words can convey the deformity of the image cast by the latter. It was a feathered cripple. It was all hump. It stood on one long attenuated leg. Its neck was tortuous as the wall of Troy.

This rickety, ornithological image produced itself in the mirror, in precisely the same fashion as did its predecessor, and, after gradually growing into substance, detached itself from the polished surface, and came out upon the table, taking its position before the mirror, *vice* the first humpback resigned.

What the image cast by the third bird was like I cannot at all attempt to portray. It was a chaos of neck and humps and feathers. The reproduction, nevertheless, went on, and the prolific mirror kept sending forth a stream of green abortions, that after a little while were no longer recognizable as belonging to any species of animal in the earth below, or the heavens above, or the caverns that lie under the earth. They filled my room. Swarms of limping, wall-eyed, one-legged, green-feathered things hustled each other on the floor. My bed was alive with a plumed mass of deformity. They filled the air, making lame efforts at flight, and blindly falling to the floor, where they tumbled about in inextricable confusion. The whole atmosphere seemed thick with green feathers. Myriads of squinting eyes glittered before me. Quintillions of paralytic yellow bills crookedly gaped at me.

I felt myself treading on a thick carpet of soft, formless life. The fluttering of embryonic wings, the twittering of sickly voices, the ruffling of lustreless plumages, produced a continuous and vague sound that filled me with horror. I was knee-deep in the creatures. From out the distorting mirror they poured in a constant stream, like a procession of nightmares, and the tide-mark of this sea of plumage rose higher and higher every instant. I felt as

if I was about to be suffocated, — as if I was drowning in an ocean of Green Birds. They were on my shoulders. Nestling in my hair. Crooning their loathsome notes into my ear. Filling my pockets, and brushing with their warm fuzzy breasts against my cheek. I grew wild with terror, and, making one desperate effort, struggled through the thick mass of life that pressed like a wall around me to the window, and, flinging it open, cried in a despairing voice: "Rosamond! Rosamond! Save me, Rosamond!"

XIII. — A STUPID CHAPTER, AND I KNOW IT.

"WHAT's the matter?" cried the Blond Head, appearing at her window, with all her curls in a flurry.

"Your Green Bird," I answered, "has been misconducting himself in the most abominable manner. He —"

"You surely have not let him get at a mirror?" screamed Rosamond.

"Unfortunately I have; and pretty things he has been doing with it. My room is full of Green Birds. If you don't call them away, or tell me how to get rid of them, I shall be killed, as the persons suspected of hydrophobia were formerly killed in Ireland, that is, I shall be smothered by a feather-bed."

"What a wretch of a bird to waste himself in such a foolish way, when he was so particularly wanted! But rest a moment. I will rid you of your unpleasant company."

So saying, Rosamond withdrew her head from the window, and in a second or two afterwards a long shrill whistle came from her room, wild and penetrating as the highest notes of the oboe. The instant the Green Birds heard it, they all commenced jostling and crushing towards the open window, out of which they tumbled in a continual stream. As scarcely any of them could fly, only a few succeeded in reaching the sill of Rosamond's casement, — the goal towards which they all struggled. The rest fell like a green cataract on the hard flags with which the yard underneath my window

was paved. In this narrow enclosure they hustled, and crawled, and limped, and writhed, till the place, filled with such a mass of feathered decrepitude, resembled an ornithological *Cour des Miracles*.

So soon as my room was cleared of the bird multitude, I commenced sweeping up the mass of green feathers which lay on the floor, and which had been shed by the original Green Bird, during his conversation with me at breakfast. While engaged in this task, I heard a laugh which seemed to come from my immediate neighborhood. I turned, and there sat the Green Bird on the mantel-piece, arranging what feathers he had left with his bill.

"What," I said, "are *you* there? Why, I thought you had gone with the rest of them!"

"Go with such *canaille* as that set!" answered the Green Bird, indignantly. "Catch me at it! I don't associate with such creatures."

"Then, may I ask, why the deuce did you produce all this *canaille* in my room, Green Bird?"

"It was your own fault. I intended to produce a few respectable and well-informed Green Birds, who would have been most entertaining society for you in your solitude, and materially aided you in your projects against Count Goloptyous. But you presented me with a crooked mirror, and, instead of shapely and well-behaved Green Birds, I gave birth to a crowd of deformed and ill-mannered things, of no earthly use to themselves or any one else. The worst of it is, they will build nests in the yard underneath, and bring forth myriads of callow deformities, so that unless they are instantly destroyed you will have no peace from them."

"I'll shoot them."

"Where's your gun?"

"Well, then, I'll fish for them with a rod, line, and hook, as the Chinese fish for swallows, and then wring their necks."

"Pooh! that won't do. They'll breed faster than you can catch them. However, you need not trouble yourself about them; when the time comes I'll rid you of them. I owe you something for having caused this trouble; besides, your Barsac was very good."

"Will you take another glass?" I said.

"No, thank you," politely replied the Green Bird. "I have drank enough already. About those feathers" (I had just swept the green feathers up into a little heap),—"what are you going to do with them?"

"To burn them, of course. I can't have them littering my room."

"My dear sir," said the Green Bird, "those feathers are immensely valuable. They will be needed to make Rosamond's wings. Put them into one of the drawers of the bureau, until they are wanted."

I obeyed.

XIV.—ON THE ADVANTAGES OF MARRYING A WITCH.

"Now," continued the bird, "what are your plans for escape?"

"I haven't any, except a general idea of throttling Goloptious the next time he comes in here, gagging the Mouths, handcuffing the Hands, and bunging up all the Eyes, and then bolting somewhere or other with the Blond Head,—that is, if we can recover her legs,—say to Grace Church, where, with the blessing of Brown, we can become man and wife."

"Are you not afraid to marry a sorceress?"

"Why should I be? Have n't I been continually calling every woman with whom I have been in love an enchantress; and writing lots of verses about the 'spells' with which she encompassed me; and the magic of her glance, and the witchery of her smile? I'm not at all sorry, if the truth must be confessed, to meet an enchantress at last. She will afford me continual amusement. I need never go to see Professor Wyman, or Herr Dobler, or Robert Houdin. I can get up a little Parlor Magic whenever I choose. Fancy the pleasure of having Genii for servants, just like Aladdin! No Irish Biddies, to over-roast your beef, and under-boil your potatoes; to 'fix' her mop of capillary brushwood with your private,

particular hairbrush; to drink your brandy and then malign the cat; to go out on Sunday evenings, 'to see his Reverence Father McCarthy,' touching some matter connected with the confessional, and come home towards midnight drunk as an owl; to introduce at two in the morning, through the convenient postern of the basement, huge 'cousins,' whose size prevents you from ejecting them with the speed they merit, and who impudently finish their toddies before they obey your orders to quit. Genii have no cousins, I believe. Happy were the people in the days of Haroun Al Raschid.

"On these grounds I esteem it a privilege to marry a witch. If you want dinner, all you have got to do is to notify your wife. She does something or other, kills a black hen, or draws a circle in chalk, and lo! an attendant Genius, who lived four years in his last place, appears, and immediately produces an exquisite repast, obtained by some inscrutable means, known only to the Genii, and you dine, without having the slightest care as to marketing, or butcher's or baker's bills.

"Then again, if your wife knits you a purse, what more easy for her than to construct it after the pattern of Fortunatus's? If she embroiders you a pair of slippers, they can just as well as not be made on the last of the seven-league boots. Your smoking-cap can possess the power of conferring invisibility like that of Fortunio.

"You can have money when you want. You can dress better at church than any of her acquaintances, because all the treasures of Solomon are at her disposal, to say nothing of those belonging to Jamshid. You can travel faster than any locomotive. You can amuse yourself with inspecting the private lives of your friends. You can win at cards when you desire it. You can at any moment take up your drawing-room carpet, and make it sail away with you and all your earthly possessions to Minnesota, if you please. You can buy a block on Fifth Avenue, and build a palace in a night, and, in short, be always young, handsome, wealthy, happy, and respected. Marry an enchantress! why, it's even more profitable than marrying a Spirit Medium!"

"So you intend to marry Rosamond," remarked the Green Bird, with the slightest sneer in the world.

"Certainly. Why not?"

"I don't see how you're to do it. She has not got any legs, and may not be able to get away from here. You won't have any legs in a day or two. You are both in the power of Count Goloptious; and, even if you were to escape from your rooms, you would not be able to find the way out of the Hotel de Coup d'Œil."

"If I were forced to walk on my hands, I would bear Rosamond away from this cursed den of enchantment."

"An excellent speech for Ravel to make," replied the Green Bird, "but I fancy that your education as an Acrobat has been neglected."

"I think I see at what you are aiming," I answered. "You want to make terms. How much do you want to assist Rosamond and myself to escape? I learn from her song that you know the ropes."

"I know the stairs and the doors," said the Green Bird, indignantly, "and that is more to the purpose."

"Well, if you show us the way to get free, I will give you a golden cage."

"Good."

"You shall have as much hemp-seed as you can eat."

"Excellent."

"And as much Barsac as you can drink."

"No," here the Green Bird shook his head; "I won't drink any more of your wine, but I want every morning a saffron cocktail."

"A what?"

"A saffron cocktail. Saffron is our delight, not only of a shiny night, but also of a shiny morning, in all seasons of the year. It is the Congress Water of birds."

"Well, you shall have a saffron cocktail."

"And fresh groundsel every day."

"Agreed."

"Then I am yours. I will give my plot."

THE GREEN BIRD MAKES A PLOT WHICH DIFFERS FROM ALL OTHER CONTEMPORARY PLOTS IN BEING SHORT AND SWEET.

"Sir," said the Green Bird, "you wish to escape."

"Undoubtedly."

"The chief enemies which you have at present to fear are the Hands that clutch, and the Mouths that betray."

"I am aware of that fact."

"It is necessary that you should visit Rosamond's room."

"I would give my life to accomplish such a call."

"All you want to enable you to accomplish it is a couple of lead-pencils and a paper of pins."

"Well?"

"Well, that's my plot. Order them at the Ear, and when you get them I will show you how to use them"; and the Green Bird ruffled out his feathers and gave himself airs of mystery.

I immediately went to the Ear, and, removing the wax with which I had deafened it, ordered the articles as prescribed. I confess, however, that I was rather puzzled to know how with the aid of two lead-pencils and a paper of pins I was to baffle the spells of Goloptious.

XV. — PREPARATIONS FOR FLIGHT.

WHILE awaiting the arrival of the desired articles, I heard Rosamond calling me through the window. I immediately obeyed the summons.

"An idea has just struck me," said the Blond Head. "I am exceedingly anxious, as you know, to get away from here, and I have no doubt with your aid might succeed in doing so, but how am I to take my trunks?"

"Your what?"

"Trunks. You did not suppose, surely, that I was staying here without a change of dress."

"I always thought that imprisoned heroines contrived in some miraculous manner to get along without fresh linen. I have known, in the early days of my novel-reading, a young lady run through six volumes, in the course of which she was lost in forests, immersed in lakes, and imprisoned in dungeons, in a single white skirt and nothing on her head. I often thought what a color that white skirt must have been at the end of the novel."

"O," said Rosamond, "I have quite a wardrobe here."

"Well, I'm afraid you'll have to leave it behind."

"What! leave all those ducks of dresses behind! Why, I'd rather stay here forever than part with them. It's so like a man to say, in the coolest manner in the world, 'Leave them behind.'" And the Blond Head here agitated her curls with a certain tremulous motion, indicative of some indignation.

"My dear, you need not be angry," I said soothingly. "Perhaps, after all, we can manage to get your trunks away also. How much luggage have you got?"

"I will read you the list I made of it," answered Rosamond.

This is her list, — I jotted it down at the time in pencil. The remarks are my own: —

One large trunk, banded with iron, and containing my evening dresses.

One large square trunk containing my bonnets, two dozen. (The excusable vanity of an individual having nothing but a head.)

One cedar chest containing my furs. (At this point I ventured a joke about a cedar chest being a great deal too good for such mink-ses. I was promptly suppressed by the dignified statement that they were sables.)

One circular box for carrying the incompressible skirt. (Doubtless an expansive package.)

A bird-cage.

A case for artificial flowers.

A feather case. (Containing the last feather which is supposed to be fatal to the Camel.)

A willow basket for bonnets. (More bonnets!)

Three large trunks. (Contents not stated, — suspicious circumstance.)

Four small trunks. (What male who has ever travelled with a lady does not remember with terror her *small* parcels? The big ones gravitate naturally to the baggage-car; but you are requested to see after the little ones yourself. You carry them in your arms, tenderly, as if they were so many babies. What lamentations if they slip, — and they are always doing it, — and fall in the street! Something very precious must be inside. In the cars, you have to stow them away under the seat so that you have no room for your legs. Woe to you if one is lost or mislaid. It always contains *the* very thing of all others which the owner would not have lost for worlds.)

A bandbox. (The bandbox is the most terrible apparatus connected with the locomotion of females. It refuses utterly to accommodate itself to travel. Its lid comes off. It will fit into no shaped vehicle. Of its own accord it seems to place itself in positions favorable to its being sat upon. When crushed or in any way injured, it is capable of greater shabbiness of appearance than any other article of luggage.)

A dressing-case.

A portable bath.

An easel. (Easily carried.)

Three boxes of books. (A porter who was once removing my luggage called my attention to the weight of the box in which I had packed my books. They were certainly very heavy, and yet I had selected them with the greatest care.)

Here Rosamond stopped, and then proposed going over the list again, as she was sure she had forgotten something.

I respectfully declined the repetition, but asked her by what possible means she expected to transport such a quantity of luggage out of the Hotel de Coup d'Œil.

"You and the Green Bird can manage it, I suppose," she answered; "and I wish you would make haste, for I am getting very weary of not being able to walk. I shall enjoy so having my legs back again."

"Have you any idea where Count Goloptious put them?"

"O yes. They are in some cellar or other in a bin, with a number of other legs."

"Are the bins numbered?"

"Certainly."

"Do you know the number of your bin?"

"No. How should I?"

"It strikes me as rather awkward that you do not. For supposing that the Green Bird and myself succeed in getting down stairs in search of your legs, if we don't know the number of the bin we shall have some difficulty in finding the right ones, and it would be very disagreeable if you had to walk off with another person's legs."

"I never thought of that," said Rosamond, gravely. "A misfit would be horribly uncomfortable."

XVI. — A THRILLING CHAPTER.

WE were certainly in a very unpleasant fix. To go down stairs on a wild-geese chase among the bins in search of the legs of the Blond Head would be anything but agreeable.

"Can you not make any pair do for the present?" I asked.

"Any pair? Certainly not. Could you get along with any other head but your own?"

The question rather took me aback. I confessed that such a change was not at all to be desired.

"Then go," said the Blond Head, "and search for them."

"Faint heart," etc.; a musty adage came into my head, and I answered, "I will do so." Turning to the Green Bird, I asked, "Will you come to the cellars?"

"Yes, at once," was the answer.

"Lead the way, then; you must be better acquainted here than I am."

The Green Bird led the way down the stairs, with all the hands

before us; but not one moved now. Down! down! at least an hundred flights, then through a hall, and into a vast chamber black as midnight.

"How are we to find the legs in this plutonian darkness?" I asked.

"Silence!" said the Green Bird, and a falling feather aroused an echo that sounded like the beating of an hundred drums; "speak not if you would succeed!"

In silence I followed on through the cavernous chamber with its pitchy walls, — on, still on. At last a small blue light appeared burning in the distance like the eye of a tiger. As we approached, it gradually increased in size, until, at last, as we neared it, it became magnified into an opening some sixty feet wide. Beyond, burned a lake of deadly blue sulphur, shedding a pale unearthly light. As we passed through the opening, a figure suddenly appeared before us. It was that of an old man. He carried a stick in his right hand, and walked with a feeble gait, but, what struck me as rather peculiar, his head, instead of being on his shoulders, he carried under his left arm.

"Who are you?" he asked, speaking from the head under his arm.

"I am an author," I replied.

"Look there?" he said, as he pointed to the burning lake.

I looked, and beheld what I had not before noticed. It was inhabited. Hundreds of poor wretches were there, burning and writhing in the seething flame.

"Who are those wretched beings?" I queried, in terror.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the old man. "Those are authors!"

"Why doomed to a residence here?"

"Because, when on the earth beyond, they failed to fulfil their mission. They lost sight of their goal. They digressed from the path of honor. They —"

"I see. They went it blind."

"Exactly."

"There," and he pointed to a floating head near the edge of the

lake, — "there is a plagiarist. His is the A No. 1 degree. There," and he pointed to another, "is one who published and edited a newspaper."

"His offence?" I asked.

"Black-mailing. There is one who wrote flash novels."

"Jack Sheppard. The Bhoys," I muttered.

"Ay; you be wise; avoid the broad path; keep faith; be true. And now what seek you here?"

I told him my errand.

"And you hope to find the legs?"

"I do."

"Come, then, with me. Here, carry my head."

I took the head, and, with the Green Bird by my side, followed the singular old man. He led us round by the lake, so close that, at times, the heat seemed to scorch my clothing. Presently he stopped opposite a great door of blue veined marble. Pushing that open, we entered a large and brilliantly lighted apartment. Here, upon every side, countless legs protruded from the wall. As we entered, the legs all at once commenced kicking as though they would eject us from their abode.

The old man took his head from us, and, putting it under his arm, commanded the legs to desist from their threatening attitudes. In an instant they all fell dormant.

"Here," he said, "are the legs of all who have ever slept in the Hotel de Coup d'Œil, and here you will find those of the Blond Head."

"But how am I to know them?" I said.

"That I cannot tell you."

"I can tell them," said the Green Bird, now speaking for the first time since we left the darkness; and it flew around the room, stopping to look at now one pair of legs, now another. At last it stopped opposite a remarkably crooked pair of limbs. "Here they are," he said.

"Nonsense! it cannot be. Such a beauty as the Blond Head never propelled on such pedals as those."

"It is true," answered the bird. "Take them down, and see."

I seized the legs, and with a sudden jerk pulled them from their place. What was my surprise on finding Count Goloptious before me. The legs were his.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "you would trick me, but I have watched you. The Blond Head is safe."

"Safe!" I echoed.

"Ay, safe, safe in my stronghold, the Hotel de Coup d'Œil."

"'T is false!" cried the Green Bird. "She is here!" As it spoke, it flew to a small door in the wall which I had not before noticed. Tapping with its beak against it, it opened instantly, and, looking in, I beheld the Blond Head complete. Never did I behold a being so beautiful as she seemed to me at that glance. Grace, beauty, voluptuousness, — well, imagine all the extensive descriptions of female loveliness you have ever read in two-shilling novels, put them all altogether, and pile on as much more, and then you have her description.

"Fair Rosamond," I exclaimed, as I started forward to gain her, — "Fair Rosamond, you shall be saved."

"Never!" cried Count Goloptious, — "never! Beware, rash youth! You have dared to criticise Italian opera, you have dared write political leaders, you have dared theatrical managers, you have dared a fickle public, — all this you have done, but brave not me. If you would be safe, if you value your life, go, depart in peace!"

As he spoke, I felt the chivalric blood fast coursing through my veins. Go, and leave the fair being I loved in the power of a monster? No, I resolved upon the instant that I would die with her, or I would have her free.

"Count," I exclaimed in passionate tones, "I defy thee. I will never forsake yon wretched lady."

"Then your doom is sealed." He stamped three times upon the floor, and instantly the Green Bird disappeared. The place was wrapped in darkness. I felt myself borne through the murky, foul air of the cavern through which we had first passed, with the rapid-

ity of a cannon-ball. Emerging from it, I found myself in the arms of the Count; by his side stood the old man with his head under his arm.

"Here," cried the Count, "is the nine hundred and twentieth. Eighty more, and we are free."

A demoniacal laugh burst from the old man as he took me, unable to resist him, from Goloptious. "Go, go to your brother authors, to the blue lake of oblivion. Go," he exclaimed with a sardonic bitterness, as he pitched me from him into the burning lake.

A wild shriek. The burning sulphur entered my ears, my eyes, my mouth. My senses were going, when suddenly a great body, moving near, struck me. The liquid opened, and closed over me. I found myself going down, down. At last, I struck the bottom. One long scream of agony, and —

XVII. — HOW IT ALL HAPPENED.

"GOOD gracious! is that you? Why, how came you there?"

"Dunno."

"Bless me, you've almost frozen. Come, up with you."

"What! Bunkler, that you? Where's the Blond Head?"

"Blond what? You've been drinking."

"Where's Count Goloptious?"

"Count the deuce; you're crazy."

"Where's the Green Bird?"

"You're a Green Bird, or you would n't lie there in the snow. Come, get up."

In an instant I was awake. I saw it all. "What's the time?" I asked.

"Just two!"

Could all that have happened in an hour! Yes. The Hotel de Coup d'Œil. The Blond Head. The Green Bird. The Count. The Blue Lake. The Hands. The Legs. The Eyes, the every-

thing singular, were the creations of Pilgarlik's Burgundy. I had slipped in the snow at the door, and was dreaming.

The cold had revived me, and I was now shivering. I arose. My friend and fellow-boarder, Dick Bunkler, who had been tripping it on the light fantastic toe at a ball in the Apollo, was before me; and lucky it was for me that he had gone to that ball, for had I lain there all night, the probability is Coroner Connery would have made a V off my body, next day.

"How came you to lie there *outside* the door?" asked Dick.

"The door is fast; my night-key would n't work."

"Night-key! ha! ha! night-key!"

I looked at my hand, and beheld what? My silver pencil-case, — the only piece of jewelry I ever possessed.

Dick opened the door, and in a very short time was engaged in manufacturing the "Nightcap" which I had promised myself an hour before. Over it I told my dream in the snow, and we enjoyed a hearty laugh at the effect of the bottle of Burgundy which passed from HAND TO MOUTH.